

SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting Thursday, December 16, 1999 2:00PM Room 433, Blatt Building

Members Present: Mr. William Barnet, Sen. James Bryan, Dr. William Gummerson, Ms. Susan Hoag, Mr. Alex Martin, Mr. Douglas McTeer, Sen. Nikki Setzler, Mr. Joel Smith, Mr. Henry Spann, Mr. Robert Staton, Ms. Lynn Thompson, Rep. Ronald Townsend, Mr. Larry Wilson and Mr. Stefan Wilson

I. **Welcome and Introductions**

Mr. Barnet welcomed members and guests to the meeting, noting the return of Mr. Larry Wilson after surgery. Mr. Barnet announced a modification of the agenda to permit Senator Setzler to discuss the report of the Middle Grades Task Force before the presentation of subcommittee reports.

II. **Approval of the Minutes**

The minutes of November 18, 1999 were approved as distributed.

III. **Remarks from a Key Constituency**

The Middle Grades Task Force: Senator Setzler, chairperson of the Middle Grades Task Force, presented the preliminary report of the task force. The Governor had presented the report of the task force to the public earlier in the day. Senator Setzler emphasized that the majority of task force members are practitioners. Among the highlighted recommendations are the following:

1. Reduction in the student to counselor ratio;
2. Reduction in the student to teacher ratio;
3. Establishment of middle grades certification;
4. Five additional contract days for teachers;
5. Professional development for all middle grades personnel;
6. A focus on the middle grades within the State Dept. of Education;
7. The creation of a home-school liaison within each district; and
8. A Summer 2000 Middle Grades Summit.

IV. **Subcommittee Reports**

- A. **Subcommittee on Academic Standards and Assessments:** Mr. Wilson reported that the Subcommittee had not met during December, but that the technical work was proceeding. He also reported on the work of the Commission on Teacher Quality. The Commission is endorsing a longer teacher work year (five additional days) as well as strong emphasis on professional development. Other issues are to be addressed in 2000.
- B. **Subcommittee on the EIA and Improvement Mechanisms:** Mr. Staton reported on the presentation of the budget recommendations to the K-12 Subcommittee of Ways and Means.
- C. **Subcommittee on Parent Involvement:** Mrs. Thompson presented materials detailing responses from the education community to the Task Force recommendations and the modifications recommended by the Subcommittee (change requirements for teacher certification to contract renewal and change implementation of incentives to exploration of incentives for businesses.) Dr. Gummerson raised concerns with Recommendations 2.1 and 4.2. After discussion, the EOC voted to refer those recommendations to the Subcommittee for further study and to forward the other recommendations to the General Assembly.
- D. **Subcommittee on Public Awareness:** Mr. Smith reported on contributions to the fund and the distribution of the video. He also outlined work with the broadcasters and a research project with parents.

- E. Subcommittee on the Staff and Administration: Mr. Barnet reported on the beginning of the study team on local leadership quality and engagement. Dr. Anderson summarized her report that was included in the meeting packet.

IV. General Discussion

- A. Issue regarding students with disabilities: Mr. Spann presented remarks to the Committee regarding the testing of student with disabilities and the inclusion of their performance in the school and district ratings. Mr. Spann recommended that the IEP Committee should determine accommodations; that the State should provide funding for accommodations; that the range of accommodations should not e limited and that off-level test performance should not be included in the school or district rating. After lengthy discussion, the EOC referred the matter to the Academic Standards and Assessments Subcommittee and asked that other groups be involved in the discussion and decisions.
- B. Mr. Townsend reminded members that the General Assembly was beginning its work again in January.
- C. Mr. Barnet briefly described the meeting between members of the SC Chamber of Commerce and Texas education groups/leaders.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30PM.